

**2024 QUARTER 1**

**You said :**

1. Sometimes our receptionists can be abrupt or try to get you off the phone as quickly as possible.
2. You don’t want to be told to call back at 8 am
3. You aren’t aware of evening and weekend appointments (extended hours)
4. You would prefer a specific time for a call back (telephone appointment)
5. You would like to pick days in the week that you would prefer to be seen (advance book appointments)

**We did :**

1. We recognise that being a receptionist is a busy, at times difficult, and skilled job. We currently only have 2 members of our team with 2 or more years of experience. We have trained the whole team on the Care Navigation skills that are a key component of their role. In the formal feedback 79.5% of respondents felt the receptionist had been helpful (compared with 18% who felt they really weren’t) so there is still some room to go. We are asking our receptionists to work through the presenting problem with the patient to try and reduce any need to call back but the unfortunate situation is that our team are regularly in the position where they aren’t able to provide what that patient is looking for at that time. We have trained our team to offer the available alternatives, but that might not be what the patient is looking for. If any one of our team is rude to any patient, then I would like to be made aware of it as soon as possible, with times and dates please, and I will investigate immediately. However, it’s hard to tell with this question whether the issue was the receptionist or something like a lack of appointments, not being able to find the hospital letter they were looking for, or perhaps they were simply delivering a message from one of the clinicians?
2. You should never be told to call back at 8 am. However, that is always an option.

As I have previously covered, whenever, and however, you contact the practice you should be asked enough questions to establish your clinical need at that point. If what is needed is a GP appointment and we have already reached our safe capacity for that day, we will then either ask you to complete a PATCHS query (and our team will help you with that if you are unable to do that yourself) or you will be referred to 111. If your need is clinically urgent for that day, then your situation will be referred to the duty doctor who will review and then decide what needs to happen. They may decide to offer to see you then and there, they might triage you to a different service or day, or they may decide that your situation is not in fact clinically urgent. All PATCHS requests are processed within 24 hours of them landing at the practice and, if clinical, will be added to the triage list the following day. Meaning it will take no longer than 48 hours for a clinician to be advising you of the best way forward. It is usually much quicker than that as the receptionists do their best to process these as they arrive.

1. Our local network (PCN) of 4 practices (Parklands, The Ridge, Wibsey & Queensbury and Horton Park practices) work together to arrange evening and weekend appointments which are provided out of the Ridge, Cousen Road surgery (it’s the biggest building within our network and it is also one of the most central). These appointments can be booked by the receptionists, but are care navigated in the same way as any other appointment (we don’t want to waste your, or any clinician, time). If those timings work for you better than 8-6 during the day then please let the receptionist know or say so on your PATCHS request. We have always offered some weekend appointments and this central, group approach has been in place for a number of years now. We have let patients know but would be grateful for any suggestions about how we might better let you know of services.
2. One of the reasons we have been able to offer as much access as we have (and we recognise that it doesn’t always feel that way) is the flexibility that an all-day call back window offers us. Each clinician will try at least twice and must leave at least 15 minutes between those attempts. However, we do try to accommodate patient preferences wherever we can – please just let us now in your initial request. However, I will take this through to our next access review meeting and we may decide to trial it and see what it does to our “no answer” rates and how it works for the clinicians.
3. We are very happy for you to indicate the days in the week that work better for you – please just let us know when you get in touch. As all clinical requests are triaged, we can try and accommodate peoples reasonable requests – with the proviso that the more restrictive you are the less easy it is to accommodate. To see your doctor of choice we hope we can usually achieve, unless they are away, to see the doctor of your choice at the date and time of your choice and the site of your choice is a lot harder to manage – especially with none of our doctors working more than 8 sessions (which is a full time GP job) but does mean there will inevitably be parts of the week that they will not be available. Let us know what works best for you and we will try and accommodate where we can.

Just a quick reminder that we have a combined network patient group and we are always looking for people to be involved so if you have read this far and would like to try the group and see if its for you then please let us know via Parklands.Patients@nhs.net

Please look after you and yours,

Very kind regards,

Fiona Purdie

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Business Manager